

## *Social Skills and Self-Regulation: Tools for Life Success*

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## Research on Adults

- In the United Kingdom
  - 6% full-time employment rate of adults with classic ASD
  - 12% full-time employment rate of adults with high functioning autism or Asperger Syndrome
  - 3% of those with HFA or AS live independently

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## Research on Adults

- In the United States
  - In a study of adults 22 years of age and older
    - 73% lived with their parents
    - 90% could not gain or keep employment
    - 95% had difficulty making or keeping friends

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## What Should the Purpose of Education Be

- To prepare for
  - Future education/training
  - Independent living to the greatest extent possible
  - Employment
  - Relationships
- In short, to create life success

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## The Purpose of Special Education (IDEA)

To ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their **unique** need and **prepare** them for **further education**, **employment**, and **independent living**

§300.1 (emphasis added)

*From Grossman & Aspy*

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## Have We Accomplished These Goals?

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### Who Should Lead ....

- Professionals and parents who make it possible for people to achieve independence and to enjoy life to its fullest.

Aota, 2010

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### Social Skills: Challenges of ASD

- Making and keeping friends
- Understanding thoughts and intentions of others
- Generalizing across environments
- Code switching—peers, teachers, and administrators
- Using effective conversational skills
- Understanding the hidden curriculum

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### Social Skills: Challenges of ASD

- Distinguishing between public and private behavior
- Understanding the message behind nonverbal communication
- Play and leisure skills
- Working in groups
- Problem solving and conflict resolution
- Self-monitoring

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Myles, 2011

### Social Skills: Challenges of ASD

- Adapting to changes in routine
- Respecting relational boundaries
- Handling competition
- Following rules
- Respecting authority
- Understanding the rules of sexuality

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### Research Shows That ...

- Individuals with “soft skills”, including good social skills, sociability, good work habits, punctuality, conscientiousness and those who participated in extra curricular activities are more likely to make more money, be employed, and attain high levels of education than those with good grades and high standardized test scores.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2009, March 26). Social Skills, Extracurricular Activities In High School Pay Off Later In Life.

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### Self-Regulation

- The ability to
  - Detect how you are feeling
  - Match emotions to events
  - Change level of behavior and emotion to match environment and cultural expectations

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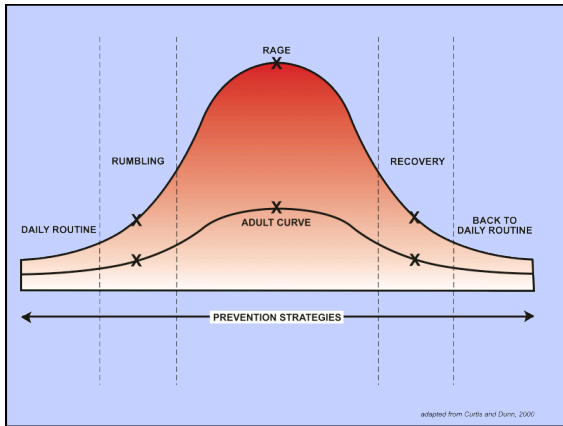
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## The Secret of School Success

- "... one of several findings in the growing body of research on "self-regulation" -- people's ability to stop, think, make a plan and control their impulses. ... it turns out that "these are really the same skills you need to do well in school" and potentially in life."

Professor Megan McClelland  
Oregon State University

USA Today, Sept 2, 2009. <http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2009/09/column-the-secret-of-school-success.html>

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*"If my child graduates from high school and he cannot read, it would be against the law to discriminate against him.*

*However, if he graduates and is not able to live or work next to other people without hurting or scaring them, society will not tolerate him.*

*As a result, he will most likely lose his freedom to move about his community independently, impacting his long-term quality of life."*

"Quote from 'a very wise parent' in Using the S-Pink Scale and Anxiety Curve Poster by K. Dunn-Brown and M. Curtis (2008) AAPC"

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Myles, 2011

## Social Emotional Learning

Combining Social Skills and  
Self-Regulation

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## Evidence-Based SEL Programs



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It is often difficult to tie the  
behaviors of individuals with  
HFA and AS to social skills and  
self-regulation

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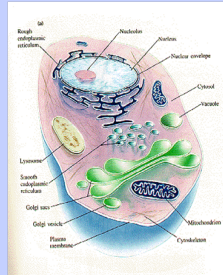
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## Central Coherence

- When learning this information, what is important?
- If you have good central coherence, you will memorize the names that match to the parts.
- If you do not, you memorize the words in order.
- Or memorize the colors.



Sondra

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## Group Work

- Challenges with participating in group work
  - Teaming
  - Negotiating
  - Compromising
  - Fact vs fiction
- Related to the social area
- Imitate behaviors that get large reaction
  - Often the behaviors they should not imitate

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## Pseudo-Logic

- There are some topics you don't discuss -- even if they are factual.
- Literal approach to life
  - People say exactly what they mean
  - People mean exactly what they say
  - There is no need to look for other meanings

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## Problem Solving

- “One way of viewing a problem”
- Sees facts instead of a whole
- Problems with cause and effect
- Does not see problems as having more than one option
- Stuck thinking
- Problem solving is often literal

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## Hidden Curriculum

- The set of unwritten rules that no one has been directly taught, but everyone knows. Violations of these rules can make an individual a social outcast.
- Phrase associated with hidden curriculum:
  - “I shouldn’t have to tell you but ... “
  - “Everyone knows that ... “
  - “It’s obvious ... “

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## Hidden Curriculum

- Differs across
  - Age
  - Who you are with
  - Gender
  - Culture



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### More Hidden Curriculum ...

- When a teacher tells another student to stop talking, it is not a good idea to start talking to your neighbor since the teacher has already expressed disapproval of that action.
- When hearing someone speak using incorrect grammar, do not correct him every time, especially in a critical manner.

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### More Hidden Curriculum ...

- If you do something funny, it is usually only funny once.
- Don't tell the principal that if she listened better more kids would like her.
- When someone else is getting in trouble, it is not the time to show the teacher something.

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### More Hidden Curriculum ...

- When you are taking a shower in group setting, do not sustain eye contact for very long or watch other people taking their shower.
- When you are with classmates/coworkers you don't know very well and you are the center of attention, do not pick your nose, pass gas or scratch an itch of a private body part.

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### More Hidden Curriculum ...

- Doctors will not help you if you arrive late, but they will make *you* wait. So bring along something to do
- It is almost always better *not* to give unsolicited information on how someone could improve their look or work performance.

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### More Hidden Curriculum

- When stopped for driving over the speed limit, even though the real reason why you were speeding was that you were pushing too hard on the accelerator, it is better to simply tell the police officer that you are sorry for speeding.

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### Hidden Curriculum Items

- Do not tell a waitress or waiter that his/her hair is messed up.
- Sometimes honesty is not the best policy ...
- When somebody asks if you like her new outfit, it is impolite to say no, even it is the truth. It is better to make a positive comment on some aspect of the outfit such as "pretty color" or "nice style".

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### Hidden Curriculum Items

- It's O.K. to notice when people look or smell in a way that is offensive to you, but it is rude to share your view even though it is a fact.
- If you make a mistake in balancing your checkbook, it is not necessary to inform the bank.

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### Hidden Curriculum Items

- An "adult party store" is a store that sells pornographic items. It is not the place to get decorations for your grandmother's birthday party, even if all the invited guests are adults.
- It's wise to be nice to your coworkers, especially your boss, whether you like them or not.

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### More Hidden Curriculum ...

- When other seats are available in the theatre, leave a space between yourself and a stranger.
- If you are at a movie theatre watching a movie you have seen before, do not tell people around you what happens next.
- When leaving a restaurant, never pick up money left on the table.

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## More Hidden Curriculum ...

- When a sign says “Toilet out of order, please use floor below,” it means to use the restroom located on the next floor/story down.
- It is important to know how to make friends, but it is just as important to know *who* to make friends with.

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## Bathroom/Shower/Locker Room

- Understand the urinal rules
  - Steve Charlton:  
[www.kontraband.com](http://www.kontraband.com)
  - Peter Gerhardt
  - Sit or stand?
  - Dab or shake?



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## You Are In An Elevator ...

- What are the rules are for standing in the elevator? Where do people stand when there are only two or three people? What happens when a fourth person enters the elevator?



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